



**The House of Representatives
STATE OF HAWAII**

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**New Law Helps Farmers through
Improvements to Irrigation Systems Statewide**

Honolulu. Lawmakers applauded the signing of House Bill 2179 today, a bill that provides for the repair and maintenance of the state's aging agricultural irrigation systems. At the beginning of the 2006 legislative session, both houses included a version of this bill in their respective majority packages. Helping the agriculture industry through improvements to the irrigation systems is a top legislative priority.

"The legislature recognizes that the agriculture industry remains an important part of the state's economy," said Rep. Jun Abinsay, chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture. "Hawaii is transitioning from sugar and pineapple to smaller diversified agricultural farms. If we are to help grow and expand diversified agriculture, we must ensure that farmers have access to water. The future of agriculture is tied to the irrigation systems."

The new law establishes the Irrigation Repair and Maintenance Special Fund, and appropriates nearly \$12 million to the fund designated for the improvements to the following priority systems:

\$2.3 million for the East Kauai Irrigation System
\$500,000 for the Waimanalo Irrigation System
\$2.5 million for the Molokai Irrigation System
\$4.85 million for the Waimea Irrigation System
\$1.7 million for the Lower Hamakua Irrigation System

The law establishes a vocational agricultural education program, funded at \$100,000, within the Department of Education to encourage and prepare young people for a future in the agriculture industry.

The legislature also appropriated \$1.5 million to the Special Fund provided that this amount be matched by \$1.5 million in federal funds.